



East Longmeadow Public Schools

"Our mission in the East Longmeadow Public Schools is to promote Achievement and Accountability in all endeavors as we educate today for the challenges of tomorrow."



SPOTLIGHT ON YOUR SCHOOLS

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ELPS sparks science innovation

By Donna Salo

On October 3rd, a very unique hands-on science fair was held at Birchland Park Middle School. The gym and cafeteria were filled with 16 novel exhibits for students to learn, create and enjoy. 208 excited students, in grades 4 through 6, with parents in tow, rushed to drive several robots from the State Police Bomb Squad and iRobot, watch a demonstration of an art robot drawing intriguing designs on wooden eggs, participate in a hair raising experience by touching a Van de Graff static electricity generator from the Springfield Science Museum and ride a hovercraft that the Connecticut Science Center provided. Additional exhibits, manned by 25 students from the High School, introduced projects that featured learning how to build straw rockets, UV LED flashlights, LED magnetic Throwies and



Stanford's SparkTruck visits the "Let's Spark Some Innovation" Science Fair at Birchland Park Middle School

bridges built out of pennies. Creative exhibits ranged from origami stars to designer objects made out of Skallops and foam geometric shapes.

The fair was held in conjunction with a very special site visit from the SparkTruck (<http://sparktruck.org/>), who partnered with PBS television station WGBH in Boston. The Spark Truck is a national initiative, started by a team of Stanford University graduate students who toured the country in a van that has been called "a 21st century shop on wheels traveling across the

USA with cool shop tools, spreading the fun of hands-on learning and encouraging kids to find their inner maker." East Longmeadow was uniquely honored by being the only smaller community chosen by SparkTruck's team on its more than three

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District and Willie Ross School celebrate successful 25 year partnership

By Gordon Smith, Superintendent of Schools

On September 25, 2012, the East Longmeadow Public Schools and the Willie Ross School for the Deaf began a month-long celebration of their incredibly successful twenty-five year partnership. The partnership began in 1987 with a vision of providing true mainstreaming in regular education classrooms for the Willie Ross students while continuing to provide the specialized support the students needed. A partnership of this kind between a private school and a public school system had never existed before. In 1987, Dr. Louis Abbate, President and CEO of the Willie Ross

School for the Deaf, and Dr. John Drinkwater, Superintendent of the East Longmeadow Public Schools, along with their two respective boards were true visionaries. The relationship between the East Longmeadow Public Schools and The Willie Ross School for the Deaf quickly became more than a relationship governed by a contract or lease. Immediately benefits outside the curriculum were seen as students from both learning communities began to interact. They began to develop social and communication skills that may not have existed before this inclusive environment had been established.

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Today, in 2012, Willie Ross students are in three East Longmeadow schools: Mountain View Elementary School, Birchland Park Middle School, and East Longmeadow High School. The ability to share resources has benefitted all students throughout the last 25 years, helping reduce challenges often faced by a public school system when seeking to support special education programs and students as well as the challenges faced by a specialized, private school seeking to expand programming for its students. In each of the schools, the Willie Ross students have a classroom or classrooms where specialized instruction and support continue to happen for the students while also having the opportunity for the students to integrate into regular education classrooms and co-curricular activities with East Longmeadow students. All students and staff feel connected to the larger school community.

The celebration of reaching the twenty-five year milestone of this partnership has included events at both campuses with a “kick-off” magic show held at East Longmeadow High School put on by Magic Morgan and Liliana’s Deaf Magicians Tour. The magic show was enjoyed by students and staff alike. Other events included a student logo contest commemorating the partnership, a book buddy event between elementary students, and a visit by Massachusetts Secretary of Education Paul Reville. The month of celebration ended on October 25th with a celebratory banquet honoring the work of the staff members throughout the 25 years who have made the partnership so successful.

The celebration provided quite a lot of fun while reminding us all how unique this partnership still is in the field of education. It has had 25 years of great success, and people are taking notice as the East Longmeadow Public Schools and the Willie Ross School for the Deaf begin their next 25 years as partners.

Firefighter Ed visits Mountain View School

By Elaine Santaniello, Principal

“Firefighter Ed”, Ed McCandlish of the East Longmeadow Fire Department, rolled into Mountain View, in style, with a uniquely yellow, not red, East Longmeadow fire truck. He spoke with the Mountain View third and fourth grade students regarding fire safety and chemical hazards. Ask a child at Mountain View and they should be able to tell you the three sides of the fire triangle



(oxygen, heat, and fuel) and how often home smoke detectors should be checked as well as what to do if a home fire were to occur. Firefighter Ed explained that families should have at least one or two fire escape plans and that home fires most likely occur in the kitchen and that all homes should be equipped with at least one fire extinguisher placed in or near the kitchen. Firefighter Ed also mentioned that chemicals at home

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District welcomes two new principals

The East Longmeadow Public Schools recently welcomed two new faces to replace retired principals at our elementary schools.

This fall, Meadow Brook Elementary School welcomed Lisa



Lisa Dakin

Dakin as its new principal. She will build upon the years of success under the leadership of retiring principal, Judy Fletcher. Mrs. Dakin brings over 25 years experience in education, most recently as principal at Milton Brad-

ley School in Springfield. She started her career in education as a special education teacher working with both middle school and elementary age students for seventeen years. Mrs. Dakin also served as an instructional coach for three years. During this time, she developed and facilitated professional development on standards based instruction, analyzing data, looking at student work to inform instruction and researched best practices such as accountable-talk and formative assessment. This is her fourth year serving as an instructional leader.

Since her arrival at Meadow Brook, Mrs. Dakin has been working on building a collaborative learning community at the school and has enjoyed getting to know her faculty, students and their families.

Mrs. Dakin and her husband, Lonny, live in Wilbraham with her two children, Danielle and Chad. She is a graduate of Providence College earning her Bachelor’s degree in special education, and later obtained her Masters degree in Administration and Supervision from American International College.

This past July Mr. Michael Fredette was named to replace the retiring Brenda Houle as principal of Mapleshade Elementary School. He is a resident of Williamsburg and lives there with his wife and two children.



Michael Fredette

Prior to being named principal at Mapleshade, Mr. Fredette was the principal of the New Hingham Regional Elementary School, serving the

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Author's visit boosts summer reading

By Kathleen Hill, Principal BPMS

Birchland Park Middle School unveiled a new take on its Summer Reading Program. Designed after the national model, 'One School, One Book', the Summer Reading Committee of Kalen Schloyer, Library Media Specialist, and English Language Arts teachers Lynne Kerber and Cecelia Schmaelzle spent the Spring reading over a number of adolescent literature titles before selecting Doug Wilhelm's The Revealers for its popularity with adolescent readers and its, now universal, theme of coping with the pressures of bullying. The program was rolled out in May and June with information about the new program going to parents and students and over 300 students pre-ordering the book before summer vacation began. Students returned to school having read The Revealers and the school community embarked on a journey of activities during the opening weeks that prepared everyone for a week-long celebration on September 17-21. Parents and other visitors to the school noticed that classroom doors were decorated with displays of pictures and key words emanating from the book's theme. Story maps adorned the corridors in each team area and told the story of The Revealers in colorful and creative drawings.

On Friday September 21, student and staff excitement was palpable as author Doug Wilhelm himself (all 6'10" of him) spent the day at Birchland Park. In the course of his visit, each grade level was treated to a personal meeting with Doug in the

Library where he spoke of his own struggles with adolescence that led him to write his story when he was older. Students had a face-to-face opportunity to ask Doug questions about his experiences with the pressures of bullying coupled with an opportunity for Doug to provide advice to students about how to face the social challenges of life in a healthy and productive manner. Doug continued his 'meet and greet' throughout lunches in the cafeteria speaking with students individually and, of course, signing their books. After lunch Doug worked with 25 aspiring writers in a workshop tailored to helping these emergent authors develop their writing skills. It was evident from this experience that the school community became stronger and more aware of the social pressures of bullying as well as safe coping strategies in the face of these problems. At the conclusion of his visit Mr. Wilhelm commented the Birchland Park staff and student body Doug's for its efforts to combine a love for reading and writing with the lessons necessary to equip young adolescents with the power of confidence to navigate through their school years.

The Birchland Park PTO sponsored this event for the school and graciously covered all associated costs of the author's visit. You can read more about author Doug Wilhelm, his work with schools, and especially, his compliments and inclusion of our BP teacher resource packet on his website at <http://dougwilhelm.com/>. Stay tuned for an announcement about the theme and title of the 2013 Summer Reading Program.

Schools update electronic device policy

By Gina Flanagan, High School Principal

Today's educational landscape is a world of blogs, social networking, virtual chatting, electronic books and Internet use. Colleges around the country are using these tools more and more to provide engaging opportunities for students and teachers to research and collaborate. East Longmeadow Public Schools recently revised its' cell phone/electronic device policy to explore the ways in which these tools could enrich the learning experience here in our district.

The former policy was outlined as "not used, not visible." Now, students in grades 9-12 can access their phones during certain non academic times and teachers are utilizing these devices for educational purposes. In grades 6-8, students can only access their phones during academic times with the permission of their teachers. In many classes, students are using flashcard and assignment organization applications to store notes and keep track of assignments. In art classes, students use their phone cameras to capture still life photos for drawing. In music classes, students are using various applications to tune their instruments and keep time to their



pieces through electronic metronomes. In math classes, students are accessing online graphic calculators and tutorial applications such as Khan Academy to reinforce classroom instruction. In English classes, students are accessing electronic dictionaries and grammar reference guides to help in developing their writing. In one social studies class, students recently "tweeted" the author of an article they were reading in class. The author tweeted back responses to their comments.

The high school is currently developing a Digital Citizenship curriculum in which students will be exposed to proper etiquette and uses of digital tools as well as safety topics related to texting, Internet use and social networking. Our hope is that by modeling and discussing appropriate and useful digital practices, our students will be more prepared for the technology driven world we live in. For more information about the new cell phone/electronic device policy, please visit the district website at:

<http://www.eastlongmeadowma.gov/departments/school/district.htm>.

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towns of Chesterfield and Goshen. Before becoming a principal, Mr. Fredette was a 5th grade teacher at an American school in Santa Cruz, Bolivia and an elementary reading and math teacher in his home town of New Bedford, MA.

Mr. Fredette's most memorable and formative experience came from teaching overseas. "I had the opportunity to play an active and respected role in a foreign community, become fluent in the Spanish language and teach wonderful children in an exceptionally high performing school. It was an invaluable opportunity that changed my life."

Mr. Fredette decided to pursue the principal position at Mapleshade in order to lead a respected and reputable educational community whose vision and values are similar to his own. "The parents, teachers, and administration of East Longmeadow are completely committed to the academic and social growth of every single child and are willing to foster partnerships with one another to accomplish this important undertaking."

(Continued from page 2) *Firefighter Ed*

should be properly labeled, capped and stored in a safe place away from easy access by children who could mix or drink the chemicals. The students at Mountain View enjoyed learning about fire and chemical safety and are looking forward to seeing Firefighter Ed again next year!

Three enshrined in Educators Hall of Fame

By Dr. Joanne Welch, Director of Special Education

One of the highlights of Convocation Day on August 27th was the induction of three more distinguished educational professionals into the ELPS Educator Hall of Fame. Andrea Laplace, Diane McCormick, and Marilyn Peskin represent the inductee class of 2012. The three inductees share dedication to their chosen profession, as well as a true commitment to helping students.

Marilyn Peskin is a career educator, working with students in grades 2 and 3 at both the former Pleasant View School and the Mapleshade Elementary School. She is remembered for her creativity and enthusiasm, and enjoys being recognized by former students when in the community.

Andrea Laplace worked as a grade 4 teacher at Mapleshade School, where she devoted herself to enhancing the quality of students' writing. Long affiliated with the University of Massachusetts Writing Project and the Lucy Calkins Writing Program at Columbia University in New York City. Mrs. Laplace also spearheaded the memorial book for Mapleshade School's 50th birthday.

Diane McCormick served the district at the High School as teacher of mathematics, coach, guidance counselor, and Director of Guidance. She was instrumental in the creation of the High School Career Center and other numerous other initiatives to expose students to real-life experiences before graduation. At present, she is branching out, starting a silk screen business.

All retired teachers and support staff may be nominated to the Educators Hall of Fame. Guidelines and nomination forms are available at: <http://www.eastlongmeadowma.gov/departments/school/pdf/halloffame.pdf>

(Continued from page 1) *Science Fair*



month, 19 city, 15,000 mile transcontinental tour.

Applying the SparkTruck's mission to inspire the next generation of creative thinkers and designers, our students had an opportunity to design their own logo using an iPad. They then observed how their design information was transferred to a laser cutter and then transformed into a final product. An EL-CAT video about our science fair can be viewed online at: <http://vp.telvue.com/player?id=T01000&video=132568>

Special recognition goes to the community businesses that generously supported this unique event. They are Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation, Pioneer Valley Riders Motorcycle Training, SAFCO Foam, Priority Press, Set In Concrete, BodyWorks Unlimited, Gary T Excavation, East Meadow Farm, Toner Plastics, Savage Arms, Abide, Con-Test Analytical, Fit To Ride, Bradway Financial, Millbrook Benefits & Insurance Services, Kit Reid Murawski and Horizon Energy Services. Without these companies and individuals, this event would not have been a reality.



The Stanford University SparkTruck grad student team

*Readers with comments or questions about our district newsletter may contact the **Spotlight On Your Schools** editor at ELPSNewsletter@eastlongmeadowma.gov. Your feedback is greatly appreciated!*

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